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ABSTRACT

This document contains the papers presented at a symposium held to examine the implications of the varied factors encompassing the certification of educational researchers as expressed by the Consortium of State and Regional Educational Research Associations (SIG). By definition, the educational researcher is one who possesses competencies in the areas of research design, measurement, and statistics. These competencies are keen and responsive because of experience gained through interface with children, educators, and communities in applied situations related to human abilities and learning behaviors. The immediate issues raised by the question of certification of educational researchers are: legal versus professional certification, a suggested role for the AERA; concerns faced by the Bureaus of Certification; role definition; professional qualifications, the impact of college curriculums; the impact on management in school systems; exclusion of noncertified school staff by "building a fence around the research competency"; and the line and staff position of the researcher and feedback on how the professionals feel about it. (Author/DN)

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"CERTIFICATION of EDUCATIONAL RESEARCHERS: MOTIVATION and CONCERNS"

This symposium was organized to present some varied points of view about how competent research practices can be initiated into the schools with appreciable benefits to progress in education. The symposium is sponsored by the State and Regional Educational Research Association (SIG).

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Loyal W. Joos; Director, Systematic Studies; Oakland Schools; 2100 Pontiac Lake Road, Pontiac, MI 48054: "CERTIFICATION AND THE CORPORATE POSITION OF THE RESEARCHER IN THE SCHOOL SYSTEM"

Lee H. Hansen; Director of Research and Development; Madison Public Schools; 545 West Dayton Street, Madison, WI 53703: "WHAT IMPACT SHOULD THE UNIVERSITY HAVE ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCHERS?"

Albert Moldenhauer; Administrator, Teacher Certification; State Department of Public Instruction; 126 Langdon Street, Madison, WI 53702: "RESEARCHERS -- TO CERTIFY OR NOT TO CERTIFY?"

Garford G. Gordon; Executive Officer; California Agency for Research in Education; P.O. Box 4346, Burlingame, CA 94010: "CONSIDERATIONS OF PROGRAMS FOR PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCHERS"

Barry Fagin; Consortium Director; Marian College of Fond du Lac; 45 South National Avenue, Fond du Lac, WI 54935: "RESEARCH FOR WHAT?"

Robert E. Clasen; Director; Instructional Research Laboratory; School of Education; University of Wisconsin -- Extension; 610 Langdon Street, Madison, WI 53706: "CERTIFICATION OF RESEARCHERS IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS"

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"CERTIFICATION AND THE CORPORATE POSITION OF THE RESEARCHER IN THE SCHOOL SYSTEM"

LOYAL W. JOOS

Certification is viewed as a legalistic recognition of the ability to perform a role or function. Therefore, certification of the ability to perform the research function in a school system must be compatible with the other certifications in the school system.

The research function in a school system is a system function. The researcher must, in performing the several functions of research, possess the requisite relationships to other members of the system.

Research implies control of others. In order to plan, design, implement, and evaluate, other people must recognize, cooperate, support, and value the research at all stages.

Research implies freedom from routine pressures of time and money. The research role cannot be carried out by someone who also must first perform routine administrative functions of another role.

The researcher must therefor have as much prestige, and even more freedom than an assistant superintendent of instruction.

It would appear that the researcher would have no superior other than the school superintendent, yet he would not be the superior of any administrator.

It is evident that in order to be certifiable for a school research role, the candidate must possess academic credentials equal to those needed by a superintendent or any of his staff. In most systems, this would require a PH.D. plus school experience. No amount of academic credentials can substitute for actual experience as a teacher and/or school administrator.

The purpose of having power and prestige attendant with the research role is to avoid the necessity of applying them. Each member of the system's heirarchy must recognize that the research role may not be subverted by him covertly. All opposition must be open and subject to rational discussion, and all such opposition must be dealt with rationally. The true value of the researcher can be maintained only by merit, but it must be established in the best position of power.

"WHAT IMPACT SHOULD THE UNIVERSITY HAVE ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCHERS?"

LEE H. HANSEN

The overall theme of this symposium is the certification of researchers. Other symposia papers have pointed to some of the advantages of certification, i.e., protecting the consumer and spurring the research profession on to excellence. It is also true, however, that certification provides institutional sanction of the socio-political system which researchers are to use to generate research findings. Before we endorse certification of that system, perhaps we ought to examine it more carefully.

It must be admitted, I think, that currently in education the university is perceived as the center for new knowledge and most organized wisdom. It is in fact the center of educational research. The basic theoretical model is that the university produces research and the schools consume research. The components of that model are not difficult to uncover.

1. Research concepts are by and large confined to graduate school courses and taught to a relatively small percentage of the profession.

2. University courses in research methods, statistics, and measurement are designed to screen people out, to produce a relatively small cadre of educational researchers who will fill university circles.

3. Generally there is little visible effort to train public school researchers. The curriculum found in most graduate schools does not easily lend itself to preparation for this role.

4. There is a virtual absence of research training among prospective teachers and administrators. The notion seems to abound that teachers are intellectually inferior members of the profession who could not possibly understand the abstract complexities of research concepts.

5. The impetus for what is to be researched comes from the university scene.

6. The university as an institution, and most university researchers as well, show little interest in public schools or their immediate needs and concerns. Their primary interest, operating as they are in the pressures of "publish or perish", is to "hit and split". To get into the school system, get some data from students, and get out while the getting is good.

But let's back up even further and ask ourselves a question. Why should a socio-political system for producing educational research, whether it be the one I've just sketched for you or some alternative, exist? What is its purpose? Let's assume for the moment that the purpose of educational research is to optimize student learning by reducing the uncertainty surrounding decisions about children and their instruction. If that is the general purpose of educational research, can we in fact admit that educators are making more effective, empirically based decisions about student learning than we were 10 or 20 years ago. I would submit that we are not. One has but to compare the empirically based generalizations that can be drawn from the Second Handbook of Research on Teaching (Travers, 1973) against present practices in the typical classroom in this country to reluctantly conclude that little if any pervasive application of research is taking place today.

For example:

1. Visit any typical high school and you'll find lecturing as the predominant instructional mode in most classrooms. It is also a predominant mode of instruction in most college classrooms.

2. Tracking systems continue to swing in and out of education like a pendulum in spite of condemning research.

3. Punitive failure systems continue to exist, unfortunately leaving children with the notion that the only reason they are learning is to satisfy some kind of extrinsic grading standard.

4. What of the common policy in most school systems of starting reading instruction at age six, ready or not.

We can all think of countless additional examples, but the point, it seems to me, is clear. If we were to attempt, on a cost/benefit basis, to justify the research mission in education, it would be exceedingly difficult.

The basic problem, I believe, is that teachers and administrators have little understanding of and commitment to research. In fact, field educators, administrators, and teachers treat research with malignant contempt and benign disregard. Here are a few choice quotes that I have collected over the last month since I became aware that I would be making this presentation today.

a principal -- "all that research does is muddy the water"

a top administrator -- "it all depends on which piece of research you believe"

a parent -- "educational research is a waste of tax resources"

a board candidate -- "a school system research department is a useless storehouse for Ph.D.'s

a teacher -- "educational research has never helped me with anything"

The basic problem, ladies and gentlemen, is that people in the field have little if any commitment to our product or our process.

Moreover, their number one condemnation of research, according to the study by Clasen, Miller and Conry (1969), is that it lacks "applicability to problems of the educational everyday real world". In short, the current system for producing and consuming research does not work because field educators do not value or understand the research process.

What is needed is an alternative socio-political model for educational research. In our search for the kernel of such a model, let's for a moment return to our original definition of why we have educational research in the first place. You will recall that earlier it was suggested that the purpose of educational research is to optimize student learning by reducing the uncertainty surrounding decisions about children and their instruction. But who makes those decisions? If in fact we do an analysis of who those decision-makers are, we find that all educators are involved in that decision making process: teachers, public school administrators, professors, state education officials, administrators in higher education, boards of education, all of these interest groups get involved in the decision making process. All of these groups, moreover, can realize a significant improvement in the quality of the educational decisions they are making about either individual children or children collectively if they will subscribe to and use the empirical model. What is needed then is an alternative model in education for producing and utilizing research that will get these roles committed to research as a process for making educational decisions.

My first contact with the notions that I am about to describe briefly was a book by Robert J. Schaefer entitled The School as a Center for Inquiry (1967). Basically what Schaefer calls for, it seems to me, is an empirical community where classroom teachers, administrators, staff specialists, and university scholars join together in the process of generating and using research to make educational decisions. What we in fact need are all of these roles producing and consuming data. We need all of these roles making empirically based decisions. We need basic research literacy so that all educators feel comfortable participating in the conduct, the evaluation, and the implementation of research. Research should be perceived as an important process for the entire educational community, not as a role for part of that community.

With that in mind I can conclude by pointing to some possible answers for my original question - "What impact can the university have on the development of educational researchers?" Let me briefly suggest five different ways that the university can contribute to the development of a new socio-political model for educational research.

1. The university can begin to socialize all educators to the value of the empirical process as an important professional tool for each educator. We know that helping an individual become a teacher is in fact a socialization process. The individual is socialized to the attendant values, attitudes, taboos, mores, and principles that are considered important to be licensed to perform the pedagogical act. I am suggesting that the value of the empirical process as a personal, professional tool be added to that set of values.

2. The university can build research skills into both undergraduate, and graduate educational expectations so that all educators develop a minimal research literacy. While this at the onset seems like an impossible task, we are probably in fact talking about the acquisition by educators of no more than 20 or 25 key concepts. Moreover, let's quit kidding our colleagues that empiricism requires a superior intellect available to the very few.

3. The university can define the problems identified by schools as their concern. University scholars can rub elbows with teachers, principals, students, and staff people, find out what their researchable problems are, and collaborate in the genesis of research which bears on those problems.

4. The university can assume responsibility not only for the generation of basic research but for the application of that research. In short, the university can aggressively share with the rest of the empirical community the responsibility for the delivery of research findings. That means university scholars can spend some time in the field and teachers can come to see their classroom as an exciting empirical laboratory.

5. Finally, the university can be reflexive; it can use the research findings which it has helped to produce to structure its own teaching-learning system. The university can be a model for empirically-based pedagogy, instead of functioning with blatant disregard for its own research findings.

Such a model, I submit, would be more worthwhile certifying. However, I doubt very much if it would need certifying, since you would now no longer have members of a profession who because of their ignorance had to be protected from incompetent researchers. Moreover, you would have a total profession committed to not only research excellence, but committed to the actual utilization of empirical investigation as one strategy for making decisions about children and their learning. If educators have a commitment to the research process, they will have a commitment to research products both their own and others. That, ladies and gentlemen, is a testable hypothesis.

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"RESEARCHERS -- TO CERTIFY OR NOT TO CERTIFY"

ALBERT MOLDENHAUER

The topic for this presentation must begin with the premise that there is a great need for educational research. Our consideration at this time is directed to research as is needed by local educational agencies or the elementary and secondary schools of our country. What I have to present is a summary of my own views on the subject relating to the certification of research personnel available for employment by local school districts.

Certification is fundamentally a protective device. Primarily, it is a form of consumer protection; secondarily, it protects a profession. In simple terms, the purpose of certification is to place a stamp of approval on a person to perform a certain function. In our profession, certification generally signifies that the person holding such has completed at least a minimum amount of preparation, has completed certain experiences and possesses certain competencies needed to perform a particular role for the school district. To be effectual toward its full purpose, certification must rest on an authority base to such an extent that parties vitally affected by the services to be performed will recognize that the basic purpose of protection is being served.

When one views the many kinds of school districts and the great variance in size and nature of their problems, there is reason to believe there is need for research -- and consequently researchers. Educational research in local school districts is usually directly or indirectly related to the instructional program, pupils, professional staff, equipment and/or facilities -- directed towards the improvement of some aspects of the total program. I am sure that upon taking a look into the operation of the school districts in any of our states, one would find research projects going on. Most of the research and problem study is conducted by the local staff. Most school districts use professional research specialists very infrequently, and then, as a rule, for relatively short periods of time.

When there is need for educational research beyond that which the usual local educational agency has the expertise and/or time to undertake, it is generally done by a member of the educational administration staff of one of the higher education institutions in the state or a private research organization. When problems related to school buildings and sites need study, it is not unusual that such services are offered by some of the better staffed architectural firms.

In summation, we might conclude that:

With this background then, do we certify or do we not.

1. The kinds of research needed by local educational agencies varies greatly and are in a number of areas.

2. Although there is great need for well done research in our school systems, there isn't a need for great numbers to be employed over extended periods of time. That is, most districts likely would not employ a research specialist on a full-time basis.

3. Assurance of competency in researchers employed by school districts is imperative.

4. The establishment of minimum requirements for persons making their research services available to local educational agencies is indeed important.

Then, the question arises as to the practicability of establishing approved programs for preparation of researchers in our higher education institutions, especially, when it is apparent that many of the competencies are developed on the job or are evidenced through performance.

Although it may not appear to be most practical to establish a great number of higher education programs for the preparation of researchers it does seem that those who do perform educational research of one kind or another should meet certain levels of competency to perform the researcher role.

When one considers the possible disadvantages to a school district in requiring certification for researchers, the one most apparent is probably the "hands tied" situation which one encounters from time to time in any certification program. However, this one must consider to be part of the price which must be paid for the protection gained. The freedom of a local educational agency in hiring research personnel would be limited.

Certification of qualified researchers would aid school districts in their staffing functions with the ready identification of a manpower pool of qualified personnel. Recruiters could then look first to the holders of certificates as their initial screening device.

A minimum number of higher educational institutions might well establish programs for the preparation of researchers after standards for such roles have been established through a combined effort of the higher education institutions, research practitioners, school administrators, boards of education and state educational agencies. Then, upon endorsement of the preparation instituion, certification could be made available.

Although from a practical point of view, universities may not look upon the development of programs for the preparation of researchers with great enthusiasm because of numbers. However, from the point of view of establishing standards and protection of local districts, certification can be deemed only to be desirable.

In summary, then, I contend that to the local education agency, the real advantages outweigh the disadvantages, in that, (1) at least minimum standards of competency will have been met and (2) a pool of certificated research personnel who had already been "screened" would be readily available. Any problems that might appear as obstacles to the process of certification are surmountable.

Although the practicability of certifying educational researchers may remain a question, the importance of safeguarding local educational agencies and providing a pool of qualified research personnel moves me to deem certification desirable upon the development of appropriate standards of competency, and establishment of approved programs for preparation.

"CONSIDERATIONS OF PROGRAMS FOR PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCHERS"

GARFORD G. GORDON

Certification is a procedure for guaranteeing to the consumers of a service that those rendering it possess a defined level of competence. Typically such a guarantee has been made at a minimum level through the mechanism of licensing. Experience in all professions indicate that this procedure is not adequate to insure to the consumers that members are thoroughly competent and up-to-date in all areas of professional activity. In most professions, licensing has been supplemented by certificates, diplomas, and degrees.

Because it is possible to arrive at a level of professional competence in educational research by several routes, it is doubtful that a basic teaching credential is a necessary prerequisite for employment in this field. On the other hand, creation of a legal basis for licensing which would not involve requirements of teaching, administrative, and similar experience and training, would be difficult. The relatively small numbers involved make an adequate governmental program of licensing highly unlikely.

An alternative is that followed, at least in many instances, in higher education. This alternative is to consider possession of academic credentials, usually a degree, as the basic requirement for employment. The scarcity of doctoral and master's programs in educational research renders this approach of limited value at present. The conflicting requirements of practical experience and academic excellence that exist for most research postions in public agencies obviously present problems in developing degree programs in this field. However, higher education institutions can develop degree specializations in educational research in cooperation with operating agencies such as school districts and these, when operating, can produce graduates whose degrees will be acceptable guarantees of competence.

A second alternative is the establishment of non-academic professional programs for developing and verifying competence in educational specialties, including educational research. These programs would include seminars, workshops, lecture courses, and internships. Requirements could be set for experience in selected educational activities. Tests of knowledge and performance could be devised and administered either by a service agency such as Educational Testing Service or by a working group of a professional association. Undoubtedly, a satisfactory program would involve a mix of some or all of these elements and perhaps others, such as recommendation of successful practitioners.

The latter alternative is only feasible if a recognized professional organization plans and administers the program. Expenses would initially have to be borne by the organization except as a sound plan might be the basis for securing planning and implementation grants. In the long run, fees might be the source of a significant part of the support of a program. Obviously AERA is the prime candidate for development of a program of professional certification. There are other organizations, such as Phi Delta Kappa, that might do so, or might cooperate with AERA in doing so.

"RESEARCH FOR WHAT?"

BARRY FAGIN

Fourteen years ago the Wisconsin Educational Research Association was established through the efforts of two or three Ford du Lac teachers. Their idea was to provide some means delivering, translating, and interpreting the results of educational research to teachers at the grass roots level, presumably the only place where it would have any effect. Teachers weren't getting through their training or through the educational establishment. They didn't or couldn't get it through reading, because the journals were incomprehensible and over-abundant. They didn't know what "it" was, but they assumed that research was somehow valuable and useful, that the mainstream was full of it, and that like irrigation it would produce rich and abundant life if applied at the roots. Today the WERA has been taken over by the professors, and the 1974 meeting, attended by few if any school teachers, became the predictable scene of professors and graduate students doing their own thing, reading papers to each other and advancing their specialized interests, their academic status.

The gap between the producer and the user continues and probably is getting bigger. It is more than a matter of creating "communication channels" or bridging a credibility gap. There may be even a lack of common understanding between the educational researcher and the school personnel. There are constant claims among researchers themselves (AERA members) that the bulk of educational research is not relevant. There is concerted political action in the AERA to make research more community based and therefore more "relevant". There is widespread dissatisfaction with ERIC, which was supposed

to be a delivery system. The recent review of the vast research in reading by ETS, covering a 10 year span, revealed almost nothing of value, as acknowledged by the ETS team. Educational research instead of becoming a change agent in the school establishment, has really become an establishment unto itself. Maybe the new NIE will make a difference, but there is plenty of skepticism in high political places, and quite a bit in the educational researcher brotherhoods.

In my own experience with educational research in the schools, in which my efforts were supposed to be catalytic in producing a "do-it-yourself" movement in program evaluation by school personnel, I noticed several things.

1. Most teachers, counselors, administrators and even specialists such as school psychologists and reading technicians, had no relevant training in research methods or even in measurement. There are exceptions.

2. "Teaching" almost never gets defined functionally. Even if it were, it is doubtful that such functions as diagnosis, prescription, and evaluation can be defined in the usual school system as activities essential to "teaching". If these are the basic skills of the professional teacher (are they?), they are not so defined in teaching contracts or in differentiated staffing systems. I seldom or never see a description of these duties in job analysis teams.

3. Teachers are not paid or rewarded for doing these things.

4. "Teaching" means being present in a classroom, or in any case with a group of students, regardless of interaction or what is actually being done.

5. There is extreme reluctance on the part of teachers to set performance objectives, to make them known, or to measure outcomes of instruction. Responsibility for "evaluation" of teaching is usually assumed to be a management function, and as such is generally feared on the grounds that evaluation is a very uncertain procedure.

Instead of being grounded in philosophy and the social sciences, as John Dewey had argued in 1896, the education of teachers had by 1920 developed a "trade school" outlook, and has generally remained so ever since. The empirical testing of school practice and educational theory is itself a trade, and whatever results there are appear to be the property of the university members of the trade. The empirical attitude that promotes investigation, which is fundamentally the systematic skepticism supposedly typical of the scientist, has not permeated the rank and file of teachers or administrators to any extent. Even at present, when

criticism of the schools has reached its highest point, any public doubt about the effectiveness of a given school program is usually regarded as an attack on the schools. At the school level, we tend to resist and defend rather than investigate. There are inquiring minds within the schools, but they are not being encouraged to carry out the necessary investigations, or even to search for validating information from the literature.

A special type of ombudsman, trained in research methodology but also employed as a teacher, is required to bridge the gap. Perhaps the only way to recognize this specialized need is to create still another certification in order to recognize the pay differential necessary to create such positions.

"CERTIFICATION OF RESEARCHERS IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS"

ROBERT E. CLASEN

A few years ago the National Council for accrediting teacher education institutions suggested to the University of Wisconsin-Madison, that its teacher-education program did not measure up. Shortly thereafter an article appeared in Phi Delta Kappa in which there was speculation about whether or not the University of Wisconsin was going to accredit NCATE. The essence of the argument was that the University felt that its program could thrive without NCATE's approval. It was not as clear that NCATE could survive without the approval of its member universities. I wonder if this isn't the case of educational research today. States and universities may certify researchers, but I wonder if the public schools will. And if not, so what?

For many years, educational research was the sport of the few--the very few. Not all who had Ph.D.'s in education did research, and the necessity of using desk calculators insured that such research would be painful. The advent of the computer and influx of federal dollars into education, and particularly educational research, changed much of that. The thought that America needed countless more Ph.D.'s, in all disciplines, (to remain competitive with the Russians) resulted in a great expansion of training programs and in a resulting pressure for research in even the most infinitesional aspect of the educative enterprise.

One result has been pressure upon public school systems for research access, with particular pressure being placed upon school districts in or near those colleges and universities which have masters and Ph.D. programs. This pressure takes two forms which I will call inhouse and outhouse. Inhouse pressure comes from two types: those in the district who decide to pursue a degree, and those who move into the district to pursue a degree (and there's usually an age discrepancy between the two and also a tenure in the district discrepancy once the degree is accomplished).

Outhouse researchers are those who come to the district seeking data of one form or another. Outhouse researchers come in two types, too: 1) the arrived, and 2) the arriving. The arrived are established University professors who are pursuing some sort of research program usually with extra-mural support. The arriving are students of those professors who either take a piece of the professor's action or launch a study of their own with his supervision.

The inhouse "movers" and the two outhouse types need the public schools to do their research. Generally, these researchers feel that the public schools need them and the research that they do.

In fact, access to do research in the local schools has been described by one of the "arrived" as a major contributing factor in his decision to stay with or to leave a particular university setting.

In general, based upon seven years of monitoring research access into a public school system, I doubt that most public schools systems need the kinds of research that is done in about 90% of the cases. I further doubt that education needs it.

Secondly, because of the relative success of Ph.D. training programs, local districts, especially the larger ones, are rapidly acquiring their own research capability. Moreover, the research being done by the local inhouse researchers is far more likely to deal with issues of moment to the public schools.

The certification of educational researchers by any agency other than the public schools, then, seems to be a futile effort.

Does this mean that colleges and universities have trained themselves out of the educational research business. Does it mean that local school district researchers are building a fence around the pupil teachers and data of the local district? I don't think so.

What it does mean is that the ground rules are changing. Researchers who want to do research in impacted school districts are beginning to be asked to address issues such as:

1. the value of the research to the district,
2. the amount of upset to district routine to be caused by the research,
3. the extent of local control of research processes, and
4. the cost to the district in terms of time, talent, and effort as well as money.

It used to be that researchers perceived school people as somewhat ignorant of research and research techniques. Now they are finding people who are able to critique their designs and suggest alternative strategies.

It used to be that researchers could gain access to school districts on the basis of personal acquaintance with no guarantees, no questions asked, and little understanding. Now researchers are being asked for reciprocity.

One school district has asked a university group for access to the university group's time, talent, energy, and resources in exchange for access to those things in the schools.

Educational researchers say that they:

discover new knowledge,

document and synthesize knowledge,

operationalize knowledge,

test and evaluate knowledge, and

disseminate knowledge.

Maybe so. But it doesn't mean a thing until it affects what a teacher does with a child at any given moment of the day.

And that result is best obtained when the teacher is involved in the five processes researchers claim as their domain.

A credential, a certificate, a license? These will not make that happen. What will make it happen is a new interpretation of the R and D function in schools and universities where receiprocity is the key and enlightened self-interest is the watchword.

"CERTIFICATION -- THE PROFESSIONAL'S OPINION"

DIETER H. PAULUS

A questionnaire was administered to members of the Northeastern Educational Research Association (NERA).

The questionnaire dealing with the certification issue solicited information on three general areas. The first of these dealt with whether or not NERA members perceived a need for such certification. The second raised the question of what agencies appropriately should be involved in such certification. And third, what areas of competency are desirable for the certification of educational researchers/evaluators. Obviously, many things can be said in favor

for, and in opposition to such certification. There is certainly a long history of certifying individuals in educational settings who are in a position of directly affecting the lives of many. In all states, teachers and administrators in public schools are certified, guaranteeing, ostensibly, the quality of their training. Increasing numbers of educational researchers/evaluators are now being employed at all levels of education, so many of the arguments for certifying teachers and administrators may well apply to them. At the same time, however, we tend to resist restrictions on our own professional and personal freedoms, and one might well argue that the activities in which educational researchers/evaluators engage are so diverse that certification becomes impossible.

Of the 120 questionnaires returned, 117 were usable (three contained the usual grafiti and quasi-obscenities found in all such studies.) The average tenure of respondents in NERA is approximately five years. The average age of all respondents was found to be thirty-seven. Eighty-four males and thirty-three females responded. Of the respondents, 35% had earned doctorates, 33% masters degrees, and 37% had bachelor degrees. Additional details will be included here.

Is there a perceived need, on the part of the NERA membership, for the certification of educational researchers/evaluators? If so, at what levels? The majority of NERA members agreed that there is a need for such certification at all levels. This agreement was highest for evaluators/researchers employed at the public elementary and secondary school levels, by a ratio slightly in excess of two to one in favor of agreement. For state and federal agencies, the ratio of agreement over disagreement was slightly lower, approximately 1.6 to 1.00. The NERA membership was fairly evenly split on whether or not educational researchers/evaluators should be certified at post secondary levels. And, surprisingly, the membership was exactly split on the question of certifying researchers/evaluators employed by private research/evaluation firms.

Who should award certification? Of the six agencies proposed by the questionnaire, the great majority of NERA members indicated that universities and colleges are the most appropriate agency for awarding, or perhaps endorsing, such certification (70% of all respondents). In other words, graduation from an "approved" program should count as prima facia evidence for competency in the areas of research/evaluation. Interestingly, the second most popular choice, 61% of respondents, as an appropriate certifying agent were national professional associations, e.g. AERA. The NERA membership was about evenly split on whether of not state agencies should certify professionals in research/evaluation, and the respondents were not in favor of placing the certifying responsibility in the hands of federal or national agencies (e.g. NCATE) or accomplishing it by interstate compact.

The portion of the questionnaire dealing with what competencies or experiences should be required for certification yielded the expected results. The general areas of research design, statistics, measurement, computer applications, instrument development, and, obviously evaluation were judged to be most important. In each case more than 75% of the membership indicated agreement. Moderate agreement (40% to 60% of respondents) was indicated for the remaining areas: foundations, curriculum, child development, and actual classroom experience. It may be worth noting, that the two areas which were judged to be least important were educational administration and special education. The latter is quite puzzling since so many of the funded programs requiring evaluation may well fall in that category.

The above information does clearly not resolve the issue of whether or not educational researchers/evaluators should be certified, nor was it intended to do so. We do, however, have some indication now of where the sympathies of at least one portion of the profession lie.